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Ribeiro, Crystiane Ribas Batista; Sabóia, Vera Maria

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Federal University of Rio de Janeiro State



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## RESEARCH

### Educação popular em saúde com pescadores: uma experiência fora da “zona de conforto” da enfermeira

Popular education in health with fishermen: an experience outside the nurse's “comfort zone”

Educación popular em salud con pescadores: una experiencia fuera de la “zona de confort” de la enfermera

Crystiane Ribas Batista Ribeiro <sup>1</sup>, Vera Maria Sabóia <sup>2</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To reflect about a participatory educational activity developed with a group of artisanal fishermen, of a community in the city of São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro. Such action was contextualized by previous findings related to socio-demographic and clinical and local environmental pollution issues. **Method:** Four fishermen with fishing time between 2 and 20 years participated in the activity. The activity took place in the morning in July, after insertion of the researcher in the scenario in the previous six months. **Results:** The main difficulties encountered by the fishermen in fishing activity, questions about health problems such as hypertension and diabetes mellitus, presence of wounds and treatment modalities were researched using participatory strategy associated with teaching resources. **Conclusion:** The experience helped identify singularities and challenges faced by the group. At the end, a banner was elaborated containing educational guidelines constructed with the fishermen. **Descriptors:** Health education, Groups, Nursing.

#### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Refletir sobre uma atividade educativa participativa desenvolvida com um grupo de pescadores artesanais, de uma comunidade no município de São Gonçalo-Rio de Janeiro. Tal ação foi contextualizada por achados prévios relacionados às questões sociodemográficas e clínicas e poluição ambiental local. **Método:** Participaram da atividade quatro pescadores, com tempo de pesca variando entre dois e 20 anos. A atividade aconteceu no período da manhã no mês de julho após a inserção da pesquisadora no cenário nos seis meses anteriores. **Resultados:** Foram levantadas as principais dificuldades encontradas pelos pescadores na atividade pesqueira, dúvidas sobre problemas de saúde como hipertensão arterial e diabetes mellitus, ocorrência de feridas cutâneas e formas de tratamento, utilizando-se estratégia participativa associada a recursos didáticos. **Conclusão:** A experiência permitiu conhecer singularidades e desafios enfrentados pelo grupo. Ao final, foi elaborado um banner contendo orientações educativas construídas com os pescadores. **Descritores:** Educação em saúde, Grupos, Enfermagem.

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Reflexionar sobre una actividad educativa participativa desarrollada con un grupo de pescadores artesanales, en una comunidad en la ciudad de São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro. Dicha acción fue contextualizada por los hallazgos previos relacionados con problemas socio-clínico-demográficos y de contaminación del medio ambiente. **Método:** Cuatro pescadores participaron del estudio con el tiempo de pesca que oscilaba entre 2 y 20 años. La actividad tuvo lugar en la mañana del mes de julio, después de la inserción del investigador en el escenario en los seis meses anteriores. **Resultados:** Las principales dificultades encontradas por los pescadores de la actividad pesquera fueron investigadas, se plantearon preguntas acerca de problemas de salud como la hipertensión y la diabetes mellitus, la presencia de heridas y las modalidades de tratamiento, utilizando la estrategia de participación asociados a los recursos didáticos. **Conclusión:** La experiencia permitió identificar las singularidades y los desafíos que enfrenta el grupo. Al final se elaboró un banner que contiene pautas educativas construidas con los pescadores. **Descriptores:** Educación en salud, Grupos, Enfermería.

Article designed from the Master Dissertation titled: Environmental impact, work and health of fishermen from Baía de Guanabara - RJ, Brazil: Peer Education as a prevention strategy.

<sup>1</sup>Occupational Nurse. Master of Science in Health Care, School of Nursing Aurora Afonso Costa - UFF / RJ, Brazil. E-mail: crystiane.ribas@gmail.com; <sup>2</sup>Nurse. Titular Professor of the School of Nursing Aurora Afonso Costa - UFF / RJ, Brazil. E-mail: verasaboia@uol.com.br

## INTRODUCTION

Educational activities follow the academic career of nurses and stay over the professional acting, being almost impossible to separate nursing from education.

Health education, among other concepts, requires a combination of opportunities that favors health maintenance and its promotion. Thus, it is not only understood as transmission of content, but also as the adoption of educational practices that seek autonomy of the subjects in their lives' behavior, that is, health education is the full exercise of citizenship construction.<sup>1</sup>

Since undergraduate early years, nursing students are motivated to carry out educational practices in waiting rooms of health units, in educational/care projects of basic education, in nursing consultations, among other activities. However, health educational practices with the community is less frequent and more challenging, by a necessary commitment.

In previous studies high, levels of fecal coliform in several rivers in São Gonçalo have been identified, including the river Maribondo, characterizing them as unhealthy environments.<sup>2</sup> These findings have raised interest in knowing the health and working conditions of artisanal fishermen who live in that community in the midst of intense environmental degradation.

Living with this fishing community, the search for new reading were encouraged, which favored the reorientation of ideas, guided by concepts of a health education program.

The Popular Education is perceived as an educational system that includes principles and guidelines to educate focusing on social issues. It is a way of being in the world that underlies social relationships both at work and in education.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, to develop popular education activities in health, the nurse should be able to prepare the participants in strengthening their autonomy in the face of health care decisions at the individual and collective level, fostering critical awareness. Thus, the challenge is to develop the political and social dimension in the teaching-learning context, to take effect pedagogical practices that give account to promote the participation of the subjects.<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the value of educational practice and its health benefits, there was a participatory educational activity, with a group of fishermen who enabled the creation of this article, to share the experience lived outside the educational environment and the nurse's "comfort zone".

With these reflections, this study aimed to reflect on the group activity performed with artisanal fishermen of the community through the basis of a health education program.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Leading the way

The popular education in health activity was carried out with a group of artisanal fishermen of a low-income community located in São Gonçalo, one of the metropolitan areas of Rio de Janeiro State.

The desire to perform the activity came from the results of individual interviews with 35 fishermen community and in the participant observation of one of the stages of the research, from January to June 2013. Individual interviews on socio-clinical-demographic aspects allowed closer ties between researchers and subjects and, in line with the participant observation and the records in field diary, there are a better understanding of the challenges faced by fishermen regarding health, work, education and housing.

Initially, some resistance by the fishermen was noticed in understanding the proposal. The field operation time and proximity to the subject made clear the intention of the research, facilitating their participation.

### Stages of group activity

The educational activity with the group was in July 2013, in the Community Residents' Association. The group was consisted of four male fishermen, from 26 to 50 years old and working experience from 2 to 20 years. The study was performed as established by Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council and was approved by CAAE 05017512.1.0000.5243.

First, a contact with the leader of the Residents' Association was established, understanding the importance in selecting a small group of fishermen in the implementation of the activity that readily approved the proposal idea. Then, it was suggested the participation of fishermen affected with the fishing problem, living near the association, avoiding their absence on the day of the activity.

The invitation was made in advance and personally to fishermen with the help of one of the community members, named by the association leader. It is worth mentioning the participation of the leader as a key person in the initial stage of the field exploration and during the research, contributing significantly to the effectiveness of the proposal. After scheduling date and time, five of the six fishermen invited agreed to participate. Thus, the activities began at 10 am on a Monday, since that day and time fishermen would not be returning to the sea as the other days of the week.



It is noteworthy that a script for the activity was elaborated in order to avoid forgetting any of the topics considered relevant to be discussed. In addition, the researcher reminding them about the scheduled meeting with a phone contact the day before.

The arrival to the association was before 10 am for the local preparation, ensuring a peaceful and comfortable environment. The chairs were arranged in a circle in order to create a closer relationship between the researcher and fishermen, facilitating the observation of the group as a whole. Four of the five fishermen attended the meeting. When all the fishermen were present, the purpose of the educational activity was explained, continuing an informal talking about the environmental changes occurring on the local as the industrial and domestic pollution, caused by throwing waste into rivers and effluents in Guanabara Bay. Another issue discussed was the falling in fishing income in recent decades.

Then, images of objects commonly thrown in the rivers and the time they take to be decomposed in the environment were exposed, such as tires, chewing gum, plastic bottles, among others. There was a look of surprise among fishermen, when realized that some elements thrown into the river or in the soil can take thousands of years to decompose completely.

Based on the concepts of a health popular education, the speech of the subjects was a priority, bringing the conversation knowledge on fishing, highlighting the importance of the participation of fishermen in the reality transformation process. It was found that there is a revolt in relation to low income and lack of public policies for the fishing industry, and the lack of protection for the health of fishermen and poor housing conditions.

Due to the prevalent family history of hypertension and diabetes mellitus seen in individual interviews, it was considered important to strengthen the main symptoms of these diseases, aimed at recognizing the warning signs. The use of visual resources were chosen such as pictures and figures, that could facilitate the understanding of the fishermen, mostly having low education. It was evident, by the fishermen's facial expressions that the images clarified understanding.

In this context, a so-called group dynamics was proposed: "What is the name of the fish?. The purpose was to give visibility to the knowledge of fishermen about the fish, that is, the species of fish that they usually fish in Guanabara Bay, practical ways to clean this fish, strategies used to capture and sale price.

To this end, several fish figures easily found in Guanabara Bay were selected. Printed images were face down and each fisherman picked a leaf randomly. The task was to guess the name of the fish and talk about their experience in fishing it, emphasizing their knowledge. The moment was fun and shared ideas. Fishermen demonstrated autonomy in species identification and domain in the fishing skill, even one who was in business for only two years. It was noticed at that time that the problem-based education is like practice of freedom, because as the scientific knowledge were discussed, fishermen responded with their own knowledge.

Thus, it was not visible a separation between the one who taught and that the one who learned. No more teacher to student, not student to teacher, but educator-student with student-educator, being explicit that the educator is not only educating, but while he

educates, he is educated by dialoguing with the student and when educated, he also educates. Both grow together as subjects of the process.<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the activity, lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes, participants were asked to draw what else had called their attention during the educational activity. Initially, they were shy thinking they would have to write something instead of draw. After clarification, everyone relaxed and participated in the proposal. The idea of the design was a good evaluation strategy of the activity carried out, in view of the low education group.

The activity allowed direct contact of fishermen with some specific content on health and environment, many unknown so far. This fact has generated opportunity to reflect on the issues discussed.

It was found that the traumatic wounds structures of the fish, or upon removal of the hook are common among fishermen. Thus, it was considered essential to emphasize the care needed when handling such structures, the importance of being with the updated vaccination schedule and method of treatment of injuries.

The use of popular care in the care of wounds was identified, such as the application of the coffee powder, beach water, catfish eye liquid. Popular knowledge about the care of the wounds was linked to scientific knowledge, favoring the reconstruction of knowledge and the reorientation of self-care. Thus, it was shared with the fishermen that wound exposure to water of the Bay, which is contaminated, can hinder wound healing. The placement of the eye fish liquid in the wound, informed by them, instigated the researcher on knowledge of the effects of this substance in the wound. However, he did not find any reference to this behavior in the available literature.

From the occurred, it is recognized participatory education or cultural action for freedom, rather than an alienating knowledge transfer, it is the authentic act of knowing. In this process, the students are with educators in search of new knowledge as result of the act of recognizing the existing knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, it is impossible to think of participatory educational strategy without the establishment of a link between the action and the student's culture, appreciation of the knowledge that is intrinsic to it and that is part of their life context.

It was realized that it is not only in a transformed society that creates a new culture and a new man. It is rather over collective process of transforming it, by which the working classes are educated with their own practice, and consolidate their knowledge with the contribution of Popular Education.<sup>7</sup>

After the closure of the activity, the main issues addressed were organized in order to compose informative topics of a banner, built collectively.

## CONCLUSION

Through the development of educational and participatory activity with fishermen, it was found that popular education is a valuable way in the construction and reorientation of knowledge. The group activity allowed the creation of an area of free expression, that is freedom to expose ideas without restrictions or prejudices, contributing to the quality of the discussions and positioning of the participants.

The valorization and the pursuit of knowledge provided an opening for the fishermen to share scientific knowledge. Therefore, it was understood that popular education should be based on the belief in man, enabling change and need of shares, constituting into open education system that fosters mobilization, organization and training of the working classes.

This experience also provided an opportunity to reinterpret the act of the nurse in the community. It is believed that professional plays a key role in the practice of popular education, since educational activities in health are one of the instruments used in a broader context, the concern should not be restricted to an individual, but to the community.

It is recommended the inclusion of popular education practices in health since the undergraduate early years, which may be enhanced in the following steps, through educational activities in communities.

It is hope that the report of this experience can motivate the participation of nurses in different settings, with different groups of workers as artisanal fishermen, in order to promote discussions and reflections on health, labor and the environment, based on the principles of health popular education.

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Contact of the corresponding author:  
Crystiane Ribas Batista Ribeiro  
Avenida Augusto Rush, nº 45, bloco 13 apto 508. Colubandê.  
São Gonçalo-RJ, Brasil. CEP: 24.451-650.  
E-mail: [crystiane.ribas@gmail.com](mailto:crystiane.ribas@gmail.com)